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Activities not classified by field: definition and measurement of e-commerce

Developing statistics of e-commerce

Note by the Secretary-General

Addendum

Measurement of electronic commerce in Colombia by the Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadistica

Related aspects

1. The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (CRD) estimates that electronic commerce has gone in Colombia from zero growth in 1977 to some $30 million in 1999 and will continue to grow to levels approaching $370 million in 2003.

2. One important advance in electronic commerce in Colombia has been at the standard-setting level: Act 527 of 1999 known as the Electronic Commerce Act, defines and regulates access to and use of data-messaging, electronic commerce and digital signatures and establishes certification entities, among other provisions.

3. Furthermore, the Government of Colombia established a unit in the Office of the President of the Republic entitled: the "Connectivity Agenda, the leap to the Internet", in implementation of one of the objectives in the telecommunications field of the 1998-2002 national development plan "Changing to Build Peace".

4. That programme seeks to maximize the use of information technologies and in so doing improve the competitiveness of the productive sector, modernize public and government institutions and socialize access to information.

5. The Department has entered into an agreement with that programme and is in the midst of a study on measurement of information and communications technologies, which includes e-commerce.

Basic assumptions

6. The substance of the measurement model for information and communications technologies will include measures of the use, coverage and application of electronic commerce in the "business-to-business" (B2B) and "business-to-consumer" (B2C) areas.

7. The e-commerce model is based on the following assumptions:

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- There is greater availability of and growth in electronic commerce, in particular in the business-to-business area, as a result of increased international trade in goods and services;
- Technological platforms based on open digital networks such as the Internet have facilitated the operational development of international trade in goods and services by digitalizing procedures;
- There is a positive trend in electronic commerce in the country resulting from increased access to information technologies within the community as a whole; a significant growth in the development of local content in Internet technology; incentives for the development of new information technology industries; more widespread use of electronic payment, encouraged by the financial sector and the Government; technological developments which promote greater access to the benefits of electronic commerce between businesses, between businesses and consumers and between the Government and citizens.

Purpose of the measurement

8. This measurement will concentrate on applications and trends in the use of electronic commerce in industry (large and medium industries and micro-businesses), trade (wholesale and retail) and service enterprises.

9. The project will study and evaluate new commercial transactions based on digital networks including electronic data interchange, electronic funds transfer, marketing of products to the end consumer, marketing of products to industry, online payment, online order processing and shipping and availability of web portals or sites.

Methodology

10. The methodology adopted by the Department to measure use of information and communications technologies, including measurement of e-commerce, incorporates universal census techniques and probability sampling for the following sectors: the state (all branches of the government and territorial entities), manufacturing, trade and services (including information technology enterprises), education (primary, secondary, higher and informal) and the community.

11. A total of more than 200,000 qualified stakeholders will be surveyed to provide information and will be representative of the nation as a whole. As part of that effort, the Department, in keeping with its objective of continuous improvement and quality control, has introduced for the purposes of this survey an alternative procedure for entering and processing data and disseminating results through the creation of a web site. It can be found at the following electronic address: www.dane.gov.co.

12. The survey results will also be based on internationally comparable indicators such as density, penetration, efficiency, quality, innovation and improvement in the area of information and communications technologies. E-commerce will be an integral aspect of the measurements made.

13. Within the context of this model it is important to stress the measurement of electronic commerce applying such indicators as intensity of use, volume of transactions, and market riches among others, which will yield data as a result of this programme.

14. Among the measurement instruments in use are questionnaires addressed to the sources mentioned; for example, in the industrial sector, with regard to the following aspects:

17. Which internet services does your enterprise use?

(You may indicate more than one.)

Free use

Electronic mail

Electronic data interchange

Electronic funds transfer

Interactive training (access to material online)

Automated production

Automated processes

Purchasing of goods and services

Sale of goods and services

Advertising and

Marketing

Other (specify).

15. In the trade and services sector one of the assessments is based on replies to the following question:

> 19. What services are provided by this web site?
>
> (You may indicate more than one.)
>
> Marketing of products to consumers
>
> Marketing of products to industry
>
> Online payment
>
> Online processing of orders and shipments
>
> Ability to offer guaranteed transactions
>
> Other (specify).

16. In addition, the Department has now identified three economic surveys to help measure the growth and structure of electronic commerce in other activities in Colombia; the annual trade report, the monthly retail trade sampling and the department store and supermarket retail survey and new vehicle sales. Their results will complement short-term measurement of e-commerce.